1.How to Pray Salah: The Fard, Wajib and Sunnah Acts

ALLAH created all mankind and Jinns to worship him and him alone. Qur'an 51:56. As Muslims, it is our obligation to pray Salah five times a day. In this writing when referencing hadith, some rulings are based on **authentic narrations interpreted by scholars**, and there may be differences of opinion in fiqh. The rulings in this guide reflect common scholarly opinions, and in some actions there are differences between Islamic schools of thought regarding whether they are Sunnah, emphasized Sunnah, or obligatory.

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The following conditions must be fulfilled before the Salah is valid.

FARD CONDITIONS

- **Islam:** The obligation of Salah applies to Muslims.

• **Sanity (Aql):** A person must understand what they are saying and doing during the Salah. A person who has lost their mental capacity is not sinful for missing the prayer. A person who is intoxicated is sinful for becoming intoxicated and should not pray until they know what they are saying.

o References: Qur'an 4:43 and Sunan Abi Dawud (4403)

• **The Prayer Time Has Begun:** Each Salah must be prayed within its prescribed time.

o Reference: Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa (4:103)

• **Purification (Taharah):** A person must be in a state of purity through Wudu, or Ghusl when required.

o Reference: Sahih Muslim (224)

• **Cleanliness of Body, Clothing, and Place of Prayer:** Any impurity (Najasah) must be removed.

o Reference: Sahih al-Bukhari (227)

- Covering the Awrah: The parts of the body that Allah has commanded to be covered must be covered during Salah
  - **Reference: Qur'an, Surah Al-A'raf (7:31)**
- Before beginning the Salah, we must face the direction of the Ka'bah and stand upright.
  - **Reference: Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah (2:144) and Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah (2:238)**
- **Intention (Niyyah):** The intention is made in the heart before Salah begins. It is not spoken aloud.

- **Reference: Sahih al-Bukhari (1)**

Starting the salah

SUNNAH ACTIONS

- **The Sutrah (Barrier):** Placing an object in front of your prayer space.
  - **Reference:** ***Sahih al-Bukhari (506)*** **and** ***Sahih Muslim (505)***
- **Fixing the Gaze on the Ground:** Looking down at your place of prostration.
  - **Reference:** ***Sunan al-Bayhaqi (2/283)*** **from Anas ibn Malik:** ***"When the Prophet ﷺ prayed, he used to bow his head and keep his gaze fixed on the ground."***

THE OPENING (TAKBEER AL-IHRAM)

FARD PILLARS

- **The Opening Takbeer:** Saying *"Allahu Akbar"* while standing. It is a mandatory act to start your salah
    - **Reference:** ***Sahih al-Bukhari (757)*** **and** ***Sahih Muslim (397)*****: The Prophet ﷺ told the man who prayed badly:** ***"When you stand up to pray, perform Wudu properly, then face the Qiblah and say Takbeer."***

SUNNAH ACTIONS

- **Raising the Hands (Raf' al-Yadayn**): Palms lifted to shoulder or earlobe level. It is Sunnah to raise the hands to the level of the shoulders or earlobes before, during, or while saying 'Allahu Akbar'(varied practice in fiqh)
    - ***Ref:*** **Sahih al-Bukhari (735):** ***"I saw the Prophet ﷺ raising his hands up to his shoulders when he started the prayer."***
- **Hand Placement:** After saying Allahu Akbar we should place our right hand resting over the left hand on the chest or below the navel.(The scholars differ)
    - *Ref:* **Sahih Ibn Khuzaymah (479):** ***"He placed his right hand upon his left hand, then placed them on his chest." And*** **"It is from the Sunnah in prayer to place the right hand over the left hand below the navel."Reported by Abu Dawud (756)**.

Note: Placement of the hand below or above the navel both are correct and your prayer will not be invalid

THE RECITATION (QIRA'AH)

FARD (PILLARS)

- **Reciting Surah Al-Fatihah:** It is Obligatory in every Rak'ah(although many scholar argue about wether it is sunnah or fard)
    - ***Ref:*** **Sahih al-Bukhari (756):** ***"There is no prayer for the one who does not recite the Opening of the Book."***

SUNNAH ACTIONS

- **Recitation Volume**: Recite loudly during Fajr, Maghrib, and Isha; Silent during Dhuhr and Asr.(Scholars has difference in opinions)
    - ***Ref:*** **Sahih al-Bukhari (772):** ***"What the Messenger of Allah ﷺ made us hear, we make you hear..."***
- **The Opening Supplication (Dua al-Istiftah):** Recited silently before Al-Fatihah.

  سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَتَعَالَى جَدُّكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ *"Glory and praise be to You, O Allah. Blessed is Your name and exalted is Your majesty, and there is no deity worthy of worship besides You."*

    - ***Ref:*** **Sunan Abi Dawud (775).**
- **Saying "Ameen" Aloud:** Responding immediately after Al-Fatihah.
    - ***Ref:*** **Sahih al-Bukhari (780):** ***"When the Imam says 'Ameen', then say 'Ameen'..."***
- **Additional Recitation:** Reading an additional Surah in the first two Rakats after Surah Al-Fatihah is Sunnah.

- *Ref:* **Sahih al-Bukhari (759):** ***"The Prophet ﷺ used to recite Al-Fatihah along with another Surah in the first two Rakats..."***

The Bowing (Ruku)

Fard (Pillars)

- **Bowing (Ruku):** Bending forward at the waist.
- Tranquility (Tuma'neenah): Remaining perfectly still in the position.
    - *Ref:* **Sahih al-Bukhari (757):** ***"Then bow until you are at ease in bowing."***

Wajib (Obligations)

Sunnah Actions

- **Saying the Tasbeeh:** Reciting سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ (Subhaana Rabbiyal-Azeem) *"Glory be to my Lord, the Almighty."(agreed by majority of scholars, although Hanafi school says it is wajib)*
    - *Ref:* **Sahih Muslim (772).**
- **Lifting Hands for Ruku:** Performing *Raf' al-Yadayn* (meaning raising your hand the same way you rise you hand in starting of the prayer) when transitioning down.
    - *Ref:* **Sahih al-Bukhari (735):** ***"He raised his hands... when he said the Takbeer before bowing."***

- **Bowing Form(Ruku):** Keeping a flat spine with fingers spread wide gripping the knees.
    - ***Ref:*** **Sunan Ibn Majah (872):** ***"When he bowed, his back was so level that if water were poured onto it, it would stay there."***

- **Repeating the Tasbeeh:** Subhaana Rabbiyal-Azeem Saying it three times.
    - ***Ref:*** **Sunan Abi Dawud (886).**

RISING FROM RUKU (I'TIDAL)

FARD (PILLARS)

- **Rising Straight & Tranquility:** Standing completely upright and pausing until still.
    - ***Ref:*** **Sahih al-Bukhari (757):** ***"Then rise up until you are standing completely straight and at ease."***

WAJIB (OBLIGATIONS)

- **The Rising Sentence:** Said by the person rising.

  سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ(Sami' Allahu liman hamidah) *"Allah hears whoever praises Him."*

- **The Standing Praise:** Said once fully standing.

رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ(Rabbana wa lakal-hamd) *"Our Lord, to You belongs all praise." Or* (رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ حَمْدًا كَثِيرًا طَيِّبًا مُبَارَكًا فِيهِ *Rabbana wa lakal-hamdu hamdan katheeran tayyiban mubarakan feeh)* both are valid

  - ***Ref:*** **Sahih al-Bukhari (789) and in Sahih al-Bukhari (Hadith 799)**

SUNNAH ACTIONS

- **Lifting Hands While Rising:** Performing *Raf' al-Yadayn*(rising from the ruku) on the way up.
  - ***Ref:*** **Sahih al-Bukhari (735):** ***"He raised his hands when he lifted his head from Ruku..."***
- **The Extended Praise:**

رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ مِلْءَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمِلْءَ الأَرْضِ وَمِلْءَ مَا شِئْتَ مِنْ شَىْءٍ بَعْدُ (**"Rabbana wa lakal-hamdu mil'as-samawati wa mil'al-ardi wa mil'a ma shi'ta min shal'in ba'du")** *"Our Lord, to You belongs all praise—filling the heavens,*

filling the earth, and filling whatever else You will thereafter."

- ***Ref:*** **Sahih Muslim (476).**

THE PROSTRATION (SUJOOD)

FARD (PILLARS)

- **Prostrating on Seven Bones:** Nose/forehead, two palms, two knees, and the toes of both feet flat on the floor.
- **Tranquility:** Settling completely flat without rushing.
  - ***Ref:*** **Sahih al-Bukhari (812):** ***"I have been commanded to prostrate on seven bones..."***

SUNNAH ACTIONS

- **Saving the Tasbeeh:** Recited at least once.(This is agreed by Hanafi school to be wajib and other school consider it a sunnah)

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الأَعْلَى ("Subhana Rabbiyal-A'la")
"Glory be to my Lord, the Most High."

- ***Ref:*** **Sahih Muslim (772).**

- **Prostration Form:** Elbows elevated off the ground, arms clear of the chest, toes bent forward.
    - ***Ref:*** **Sahih al-Bukhari (822):** ***"Let none of you rest his forearms on the ground like a dog."***
- **Repeating the Tasbeeh:** Saying it three times.
    - ***Ref:*** **Sunan Abi Dawud (886).**
- **Making Dua:** Asking Allah anything and everything you want in arabic or you do it in your own language
    - Reference: Sahih Muslim (Hadith 482) and Reference 2: Sahih Muslim & Sunan an-Nasa'i (Hadith 1045)

SITTING BETWEEN THE TWO PROSTRATIONS

FARD (PILLARS)

- **Sitting Upright & Tranquility:** Coming completely off the floor into a still, seated posture.
    - ***Ref:*** **Sahih al-Bukhari (757):** ***"Then rise until you are sitting completely straight and at ease."***

SUNNAH ACTIONS

- **Seeking Forgiveness:** Recited at least once.

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي (Rabbighfir lee) *"My Lord, forgive me."*

    - ***Ref:*** **Sunan Ibn Majah (897).**

- **Sitting Posture (Iftirishah):** Sitting flat on the left foot while propping the right foot upright.

- *Ref:* **Sahih Muslim (498):** ***"The Prophet ﷺ used to lay his left foot flat on the ground and prop his right foot up vertically."***

- **The Complete Seated Supplication:**

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَارْحَمْنِي وَاجْبُرْنِي وَاهْدِنِي وَارْزُقْنِي *"(* "Allahumma-ghfir lee, war-hamnee, waj-burnee, wah-dinee, war-zuqnee")*O Allah, forgive me, have mercy on me, mend my shortcomings, guide me, and grant me sustenance."*

- *Ref:* **Sunan al-Tirmidhi (284).**

THE TASHAHHUD (SITTING & TESTIMONY)

FARD (PILLARS)

- **In three- and four-Rak'ah prayers, the first Tashahhud is recited after the second Rak'ah. The final Tashahhud is recited in the last Rak'ah of every prayer:** Remaining seated to say the final testimony. **التَّحِيَّاتُ لِلَّهِ وَالصَّلَوَاتُ وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ، السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ، السَّلَامُ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى عِبَادِ اللَّهِ الصَّالِحِينَ، أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ**(At-Tahiyyaatu lillaahi was-Salawaatu wat-Tayyibaatu. As-Salaamu 'alayka ayyuhan-Nabiyyu wa rahmatullaahi wa barakaatuh. As-Salaamu 'alaynaa wa 'alaa 'ibaadillaahis-saaliheen. Ash-hadu allaa ilaaha illallaahu wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhoo wa Rasooluh.) "All compliments, prayers, and pure words are due to Allah. Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and the mercy of Allah and His blessings. Peace be upon us and upon the righteous servants of Allah. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy

of worship except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger."

  - *Ref:* **Sahih al-Bukhari (6265):** ***"The Prophet ﷺ taught me the Tashahhud... 'At-Tahiyyaatu lillaahi..."***

- **Sending Blessings to the prophet Muhammad(SAW) and Ibrahim(SAW) (Salat al-Ibrahimiyyah) only in the <u>final sitting of every Salat</u>:** اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ، اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ(Allahumma salli 'ala Muhammadin wa 'ala aali Muhammadin, kama sallayta 'ala Ibraheema wa 'ala aali Ibraheema, innaka Hameedun Majeed. Allahumma baarik 'ala Muhammadin wa 'ala aali Muhammadin, kama baarakta 'ala Ibraheema wa 'ala aali Ibraheema, innaka Hameedun Majeed.) "O Allah, send prayers upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad, as You sent prayers upon Abraham and upon the family of Abraham; You are indeed Praiseworthy, Most Glorious. O Allah, send blessings upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad, as You sent blessings upon Abraham and upon the family of Abraham; You are indeed Praiseworthy, Most Glorious."
  - *Ref:* **Sahih al-Bukhari (3370):** ***"Say: Allahumma salli 'ala Muhammadin..."***
- **The Concluding Tasleem:** Turning the head and giving salam[السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللهِ(*As-salaamu ‘alaykum wa rahmatullah)* Peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah.] to the angels on your right and left.
  - **Ref: Sunan Abi Dawud (996-997)**

<u>Wajib (Obligations)</u>

- **The First Tashahhud:** Sitting to recite the Tashahhud at the end of the second Rakat.

- ***Ref:*** **Sahih al-Bukhari (1224): The Prophet skipped it by mistake and corrected it with *Sujood al-Sahw*, showing it is Wajib.**

SUNNAH ACTIONS

- **The Finger Signal**: Pointing the right index finger straight and supplicate with it during Tashahhud.
  - ***Ref:*** **Sahih Muslim (580): *"...and he pointed with his index finger."***
- **Final Sitting Style (Tawarruk)**: Sitting on the left hip on the floor, passing the left foot beneath the right shin (only in 3 and 4 Rakat prayers).
  - ***Ref:*** **Sahih al-Bukhari (828).**
- **The Four Protections Before the Salaam: Supplicating before exit.**

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْمَحْيَا وَالْمَمَاتِ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ فِتْنَةِ الْمَسِيحِ الدَّجَّالِ ("Allāhumma innī aʿūdhu bika min ʿadhābi jahannam, wa min ʿadhābi-l-qabr, wa min fitnati-l-maḥyā wa-l-mamāt, wa min sharri fitnati-l-masīḥi-d-dajjāl.) *"O Allah, I seek refuge with You from the punishment of Hellfire, from the punishment of the grave, from the trials of life and death, and from the evil trial of the False Messiah."* جَهَنَّمَ، وَمِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ، وَمِنْ فِتْنَةِ

  - ***Ref:*** **Sahih Muslim (588).**